



# WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



## WCMA SIGNATURE EVENTS



2023 UNITED STATES CHAMPIONSHIP  
**CHEESE  
CONTEST**  
21<sup>st</sup> BIENNIAL

[USCHAMPIONCHEESE.ORG](http://USCHAMPIONCHEESE.ORG)

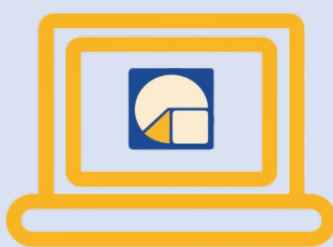
## Enter U.S. Championship Cheese Contest by December 1 for Special Early Entry Rates

Less than one month remains to take advantage of special early entry rates for the 2023 United States Championship Cheese Contest®! [Submit entries by December 1](#) to receive a \$10 discount on your entry fee. For full entry requirements, including a list of all 118 classes offered, please consult the [Official Contest Entry Kit](#).

The 21st biennial U.S. Championship Cheese Contest will be hosted by WCMA February 21-23 in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Entries of cheese, butter, yogurt, and dry dairy ingredients will be evaluated by a team of expert judges before the nation's Top 20 cheeses - and the 2023 U.S. Champion - will be announced in a special livestream event.

Have questions? Please contact [WCMA Events Manager Kirsten Strohmenger](#).

**ENTER NOW**



# WCMA Webinar

## U.S. Championship Cheese Contest 101



### Join Free WCMA Contest Webinar Next Tuesday

Attend WCMA's [free webinar](#) next Tuesday, November 15 at 1:00 p.m. (CT) for an inside look at the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest. Learn how to enter, how products are evaluated, and tips to make the most of your participation - whether or not you come away with a medal! Here's a look at the webinar agenda:

- U.S. Championship Cheese Contest Fast Facts & Entry Overview
  - Presenter: Kirsten Strohmenger, WCMA Events Manager
- Contest Product Evaluations
  - Presenter: Jim Mueller, U.S. Championship Cheese Contest Chief Judge
- Value of Contest Competition
  - Presenters:
    - Grace Atherton, WCMA Communications Director
    - Marieke Penterman, Marieke Gouda
    - Ryan Gillespie, Sartori Company

Presenters will reserve time to field audience questions during the webinar. To submit a question in advance, please email [WCMA staff](#) by Monday, November 14 at 12:00 p.m. (CT).

[REGISTER NOW](#)

## WCMA NOTES

### Consensus on Key Issues Can Get the Federal Order Reform Party Started



In this month's [WCMA Notes column](#), Executive Director John Umhoefer notes that momentum is building for a national hearing to address reforms for federal milk marketing orders: just last week, WCMA [released its own set of concepts](#) after months of deliberation by an ad hoc committee.

With alignment between WCMA and other dairy organizations such as National Milk Producers Federation on several key recommendations, the time is right for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to announce topics for consideration and move forward, writes Umhoefer. Read the full column at [WisCheeseMakers.org](#).

## ADVOCACY



## Today is Election Day!

All WCMA members are strongly encouraged to vote in the upcoming midterm elections today, Tuesday, November 8.

The U.S. government provides information at [USA.gov](https://www.usa.gov) for voters nationwide including registration status, polling location, and more.

Through [MyVote Wisconsin](https://myvote.wisconsin.gov), the state Elections Commission offers helpful resources specific to Wisconsin voters:

- You can [register to vote](#) in advance or on Election Day.
- [Enter your address online](#) to find your polling location. Polls will be open from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. on Election Day.
- You can [preview your ballot](#) online.

WCMA does not endorse political candidates, but urges members to make their voices heard in each and every election cycle.



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# POLICY COMMITTEE

## Join WCMA Policy Committee Thursday for Post-Election Briefing

Join the WCMA Policy Committee this Thursday, November 10 from 1:00-2:00 p.m. (CT) for a [free, virtual post-election briefing](#) exclusively for WCMA members. WCMA staff will deliver analysis of Wisconsin and federal races following today's midterm elections, focusing on the impact of election outcomes on policy priorities important to the dairy processing industry.

Have questions or suggestions? Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).



INDUSTRY UPDATES

## MHF Group Holdings Acquires La Crosse Agropur Plant



MHF Group Holdings, a subsidiary of Dallas-based Select Milk Producers Inc. and owner of the Mill Haven Foods family of companies, **last week announced** that it has purchased WCMA member Agropur's Custom Solutions and Contract Manufacturing business in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Mill Haven Foods opened in 2010 in New Lisbon, Wisconsin and was acquired by Select Milk in June 2022.

Brian Slater, CEO of Mill Haven Foods, and Mike Homewood, Vice President of Custom Solutions for Agropur Ingredients-Custom Solutions, said the deal will help the businesses expand their blended ingredient solutions and reach a wider customer base in the U.S. and internationally.



## Great Lakes Cheese Opens Abilene Site

Congratulations to WCMA member Great Lakes Cheese, which yesterday celebrated the grand opening of its newest expansion in Abilene, Texas. Construction on the 286,500-square-foot packaging and distribution facility **began in May 2021**, creating **hundreds of jobs** in the surrounding community.



## U.S. Dairy Exports Up 7 Percent in September

New data shows **U.S. dairy exports showed continued strong growth** this fall, with whey, cheese, and lactose setting new September records and export volume rising 7 percent that month. Whey shipments jumped 18 percent - the fourth straight month of year-over-year gains in the double digits. Butter exports also saw an increase of 49 percent ahead of an expected slowdown in the coming months.

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## Leading Experts Share Key Insights at Wisconsin Dairy Export Workshop

WCMA thanks all those who participated in last week's Wisconsin Dairy Export Workshop, including speakers from the U.S. Dairy Export Council; the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; Food Export Midwest; MCT Dairies; Hancock International; Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin; Wisconsin Economic Development



Corporation; and the Center for Dairy Research.

Materials and contact information from each presentation are now available via the links below:

- [U.S. Dairy Export Council: Global Trends Driving Dairy Demand](#)
  - Contact: [Megan Sheets](#)
- [Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: Overview of Dairy Export Activities and Services](#)
  - Contact: [Lisa Stout](#)
- [Food Export Midwest: Services Overview](#)
  - Contact: [Paul Weiss](#)
- [Food Export Midwest: Branded Grants Program Presentation](#)
  - Contact: [Paul Weiss](#)
- [MCT Dairies: Key Considerations for New Dairy Exporters](#)
  - Contact: [Ryan Wucherer](#)
- [Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin: Export Endeavors & Resources](#)
  - Contact: [Rick Findlay](#)
- [Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation: International Market Access Grants](#)
  - Contact: [Katie Uj dak](#)
- [Center for Dairy Research: Export Resources](#)
  - Contact: [Tom Guerin](#)
- [Center for Dairy Research/Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association: Dairy Business Innovation Alliance Grants](#)
  - Contacts: [Tom Guerin](#) and [Rebekah Sweeney](#)



## Apply Now for Free Export Consultations

Thanks to support from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, WCMA will be offering free export consultation to ten Wisconsin dairy manufacturers and processors, now through May 2024. Each participating manufacturer/processor will receive up to 30 hours of no-cost consultative services with Ryan Wucherer of MCT Dairies.

For new-to-export companies and cooperatives, consultations will include:

- Evaluations of their product line, helping to identify potential global customers;
- Direction to in-depth educational resources, such as ExporTech™;
- Aid in the creation of their export plan; and,
- Aid in the execution of their export plan through the completion of necessary export paperwork and by connecting the business with potential carriers and distributors.

For companies and cooperatives currently engaged in export activities, consultations will include:

- Evaluations and recommendations on refinements in their export business model;
- Identify areas for export growth;
- Aid in the execution of export plans; and,
- Recommendations on improvements in products, packaging, marketing, labeling, sales or distribution.

To participate in this new program, simply [complete our one-page application](#) and return it to [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#). Please note, services will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

[DOWNLOAD APPLICATION](#)



## Register Now for WEDC Mexico Trade Venture

Wisconsin dairy companies looking to begin or expand their export activities, are invited to join the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's (WEDC) [upcoming trade venture to Mexico](#). Scheduled for February 19-24, 2023, this program includes one-on-one meetings with potential partners, a personalized market assessment, interpreter services, hotel accommodations, and some meals and transportation costs. Registrations are due next Friday, November 25. Please contact [WEDC staff](#) with questions.

[RESERVE SPACE](#)

## Join Free WEDC Webinar on Israel Opportunities

Registration is now open for a [free informational webinar](#) hosted by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), focused on export opportunities to Israel ahead of the agency's [virtual Global Trade Venture](#) to the country January 23-27. Registrations for the January venture are due December 9. Questions may be directed to [WEDC staff](#).

[ATTEND WEBINAR](#)

# Attend WDATCP Webinar on New Local Food Purchasing Program



Registration is now open for a [free informational webinar](#) on Monday, November 21 from 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (CT) focused on the new [Wisconsin Local Food Purchasing Agreement Program](#). Through the agreement, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection will work collaboratively with producers, distributors, food security organizations, and tribal partners to provide program development, coordinate transportation and logistics, and procure food from local producers.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

## IN THE NEWS

### Wisconsin

- *WFRV-TV*: [Cheesemakers offer ideas to change milk price formulas](#) (Featuring WCMA)
- *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*: [Sweet cheese? In Wisconsin, any dairy twist is possible](#) (Featuring WCMA members Arena Cheese Company, Carr Valley Cheese, Henning's Cheese, LaClare Family Creamery, Maple Leaf Cheesemakers, Pine River Pre-Pack, Renard's Cheese, and Sartori Company)
- *Only In Your State*: [This cheese and sausage themed restaurant in Wisconsin is what dreams are made of](#) (Featuring WCMA members Chalet Cheese Cooperative and Novak's Cheese)

### National/International

- *The Scoop*: [Midterm elections could have big impact on next Farm Bill](#)
- *The Hagstrom Report*: [Ag groups ask Congress to prevent rail strike or lockout](#) (Featuring WCMA member United Dairymen of Arizona)
- *Agri-Pulse*: [Milk industry questions FDA approach to infant formula shortages](#)
- *Dairy Foods*: [2022 State of the Industry: Over the moon for cheese, glorious cheese](#) (Featuring WCMA members Organic Valley and Saputo Dairy USA)
- *Fresno State News*: [\\$19M grant extends dairy business innovation program led by Fresno State](#)
- *The Auburn Citizen*: [Milk plant plans \\$150M expansion project in Cayuga County](#)
- *Bon Appetit*: [A highly opinionated guide to the best butter for baking](#) (Featuring WCMA member Cabot Creamery Cooperative)

## WCMA STAFFING UPDATES

### WCMA Grows Staff Team, Member Services

WCMA is pleased to welcome Danica Nilsestuen as Grant & Business Programs Director, supporting a growing portfolio of member services.

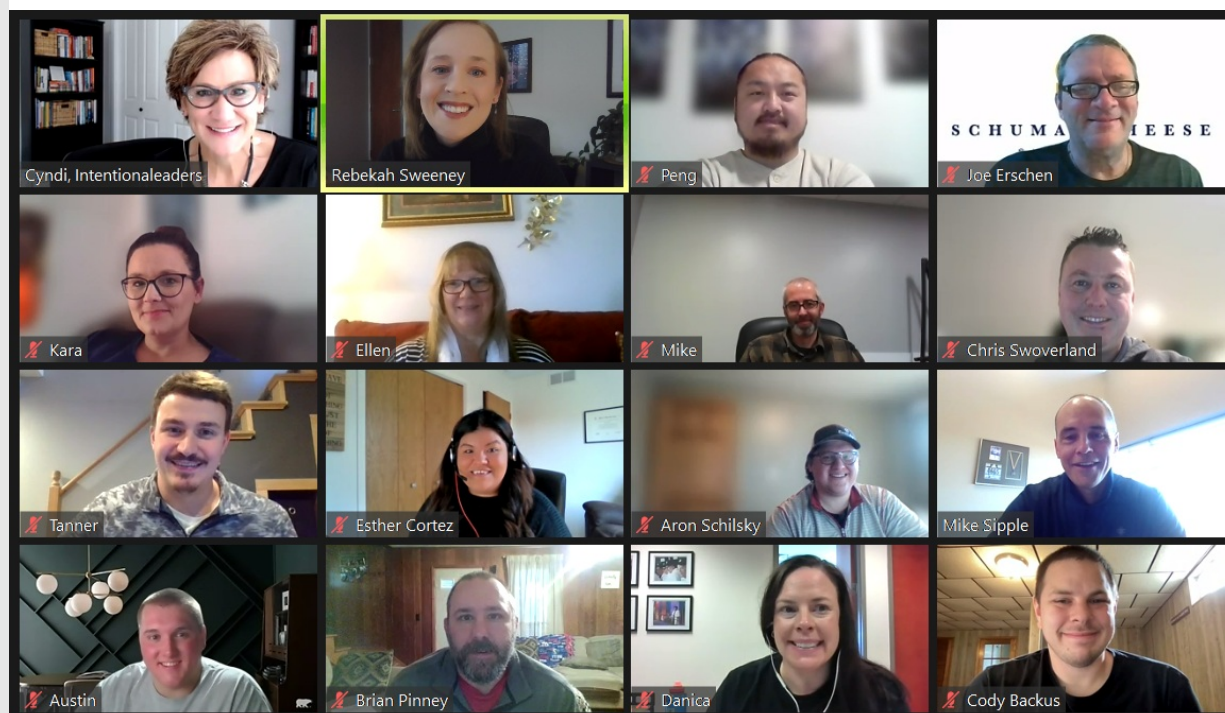


Danica brings more than a decade of experience in business development and workforce innovation in addition to managing a multimillion dollar portfolio of federal grants for the Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin. As part of the WCMA team, she will lead the administration of grant programs through WCMA and assist members in finding and pursuing new business development opportunities.

Danica can be reached via email at [dnilstestuen@wischeesemakers.org](mailto:dnilstestuen@wischeesemakers.org) or by phone at (608) 673-5547.



## EDUCATION



## WCMA Director Shares Insights with Advanced Leadership Trainees

WCMA sincerely thanks Agropur's Mike Sipple, a member of the WCMA Board of Directors and an accomplished leader in dairy processing, for sharing his insights with our Advanced Leadership trainees. Our thanks also go to this group of eager participants, and to the WCMA member companies who support their employees' ongoing learning: Associated Milk Producers, Inc.; Baker Cheese; Great Lakes Cheese; Klondike Cheese Company; Land O' Lakes; Masters Gallery Foods; Sartori Cheese; Schuman Cheese; WDS Construction; and Westby Cooperative Creamery.

## Industry Training Spotlight: MWFPA Hosts November 29 Food Defense Seminar



Dairy processors and related suppliers are invited to [register now for a Food Defense Seminar](#) hosted by Midwest Food Processors Association (MWFP) November 29 from 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. (CT) at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells.

This one-day training will be presented by P.C. Vasavada, a former food science instructor at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. WCMA members may receive the special MWFP member rate when three or more attendees from the same company register to attend.

**SIGN UP**

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## Additional Industry Training Opportunities

WCMA is pleased to share opportunities for industry-specific training and enrichment. Here's a look at trainings hosted by WCMA members and partners:

- November 9: [Cheesemaking Fundamentals \(Online, Self-Study\)](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- November 16: [Dairy Ingredients Fundamentals \(Online, Self-Study\)](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- Rolling Admission:
  - [Online HACCP Training](#) - North Carolina State University
  - [Environmental Monitoring in the Dairy Industry](#) - North Carolina State University
  - [Preventive Controls for Dairy Processors](#) - North Carolina State University
  - [Food Safety Basics For Artisan Cheesemakers](#) - North Carolina State University

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## WORKFORCE



### Join WCMA Workforce & Education Committee Meeting November 21

Mark your calendar now for the next meeting of the WCMA Workforce & Education Committee on November 21 from 1:00-2:30 p.m. (CT). Topics for the meeting will include the launch of WCMA's dairy industry video onboarding series and the 2023 WCMA Wage & Workforce Survey.

To RSVP for the meeting, ask questions, and share ideas, please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

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Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association

## Health & Safety Group

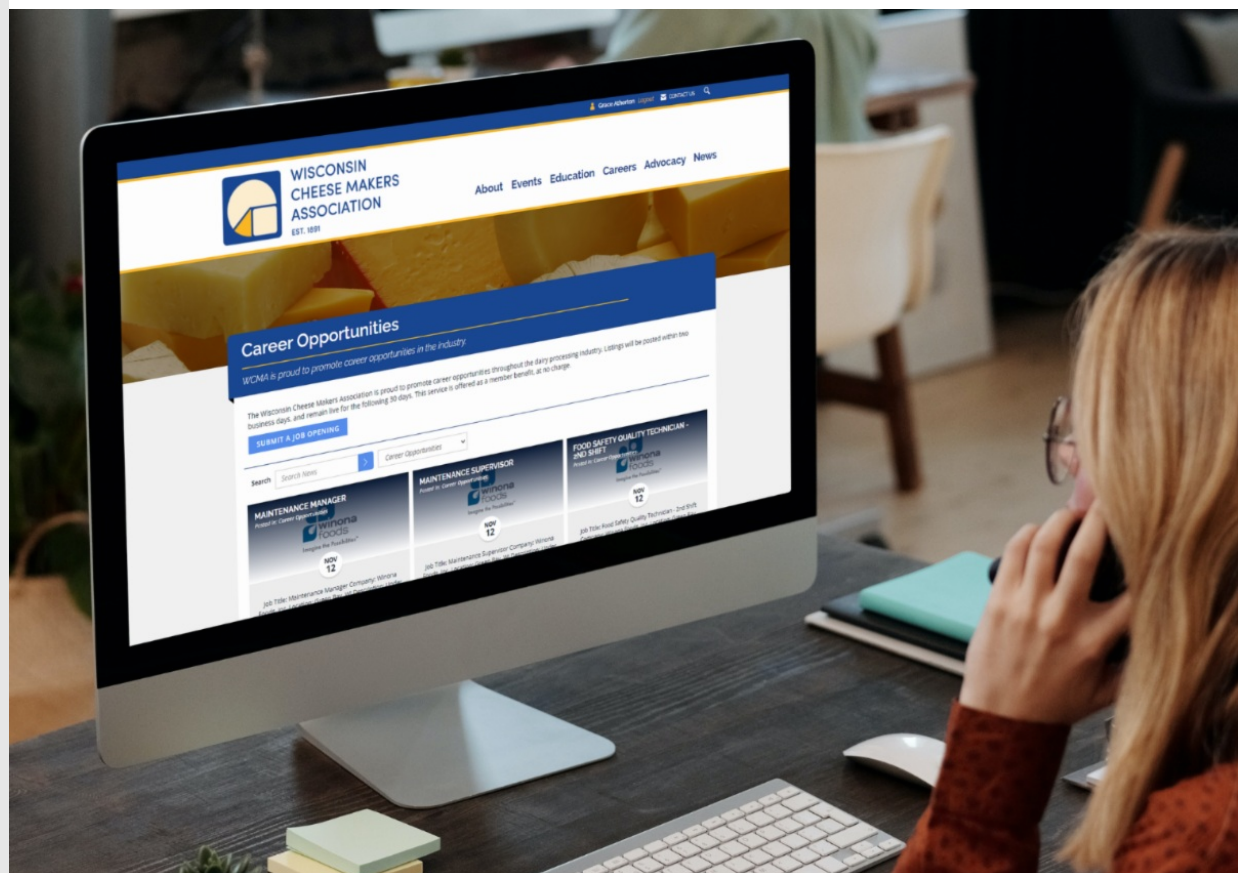
### Save the Date for December WCMA Health & Safety Group Meeting

Make plans today to attend the [next meeting of WCMA's Health & Safety Group](#), set for December 8 from 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (CT). This meeting will focus on combustible dust protocols and related OSHA enforcement, OSHA's food processor local emphasis program, and employee safety training resources for the dairy processing supply chain. Additional content and speakers will be announced in the coming weeks.

WCMA is offering two ways to participate: in-person in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin or online via Zoom. In-person attendees will enjoy a networking lunch.

Have ideas or questions? Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

**REGISTER NOW**



### Build Your Team with Free WCMA Jobs Board

Visit WCMA's [online jobs board](#) to view current career opportunities at the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources and WCMA members Foremost Farms USA, Masters Gallery Foods, Nelson-Jameson, Tetra Pak, and Winona Foods.



Have an opportunity at your company or cooperative? WCMA members may [post up to 10 openings](#) per company, per month on the Jobs Board for free! Please contact [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#) with questions.

## MEMBERSHIP



### Vote by November 22 for WCMA Distinguished Service Award

[Cast your vote today](#) to help select the individuals that will be honored with the [WCMA Distinguished Service Award](#) in 2023. This award recognizes supplier partner members who have played a significant role in building the success of the U.S. dairy industry. In 2022, this honor was presented to James Manning of EDCO Food Products and Art Zimmer of Caloris Engineering.

WCMA members may vote for as many nominees as they like, with up to 10 individual voters permitted per company. **All votes must be received by Tuesday, November 22.** The WCMA Board will select the 2023 Distinguished Service Award honorees at its December meeting.

Questions? Please contact [WCMA Events Manager Caitlin Peirick](#).

**VOTE NOW**

**Lindemanns Awarded EWCA Life Membership**



WCMA applauds members Phil and Mary Lindemann of Pine River Pre-Pack, Inc. on receiving the Life Membership Award from the Eastern Wisconsin Cheesemakers and Buttermakers Association (EWCBA).

The Lindemanns were presented with the honor on November 2 at the EWCBA Fall Convention in recognition of their contributions to the cheese industry over four decades. Congratulations, Phil and Mary!

## GRANTS



## Dairy Business Builder Grant Applications Due Thursday

Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. (CT) this Thursday, November 10 for the latest round of [Dairy Business Builder grants](#) through the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance (DBIA), a collaborative partnership between WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research.

Reimbursement grants of up to \$100,000 each will be awarded to small- to medium-sized dairy farmers, manufacturers, and processors in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, Kansas, and Wisconsin. The awards aim to support recipients in diversifying on-farm activity, creating value-added products, enhancing dairy byproducts, and creating or enhancing dairy export programs.

Application materials, including a free webinar with helpful tips to build a strong proposal, are now [available online](#). Successful applicants will be notified by December 15, 2022.

Have questions about DBIA? Please contact [WCMA Grants & Business Programs Director Danica Nilsestuen](#).

**SUBMIT PROPOSALS**



## Apply for Dairy Processor Grants by January 30

Wisconsin dairy manufacturers and processors can [apply now through January 30 for a new round of Dairy Processor Grants](#) administered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP). The program, which aims to strengthen Wisconsin's dairy processing industry, saw its [funding doubled in the state budget](#) following successful advocacy efforts by WCMA.

In 2023, grants of up to \$50,000 each will be awarded following a competitive review process. Recipients will be required to match at least 20 percent of their grant amount. Questions may be directed to [WDATCP staff](#).

**APPLY TODAY**

## DBIA Delivers

*Success Stories from the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance*

### Marcoot Jersey Creamery

Greenville, Illinois

DBIA Grant Recipient  
2020



**#DBIADelivers Spotlights Grant Recipients**



Since the creation of the [Dairy Business Innovation Alliance \(DBIA\)](#) in the 2018 Farm Bill, WCMA and CDR have partnered to administer over \$3.7 million in 79 grants across two programs to dairy farmers and processors in participating states.

WCMA's newest social media series, DBIA Delivers, highlights the successes of dairy entrepreneurs that have taken their businesses to the next level thanks to DBIA grants.

Today in #DBIADelivers, meet [Marcoot Jersey Creamery](#) of Greenville, Illinois. This seventh-generation family-farm creamery utilized its DBIA grant to purchase new equipment to explore the creation of a new high-protein, frozen sports recovery product from whey.

Follow along on WCMA's [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#) for more inspiring stories, and use the hashtag #DBIADelivers to share how DBIA has helped support your business!

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**WisCheeseMakers.org**  
**(608) 286-1001**



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